

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims in this application, reflects all changes currently being made to the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and all earlier listings of the claims:

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus that manages a predetermined device capable of performing communication over a network, comprising:

a holding unit configured to hold corresponding information corresponding to first device identification information and second device identification information;

an obtaining unit configured to obtain accounting information based on an image forming operation from the predetermined device;

a comparing unit configured to means for comparing compare a combination of the first device identification information and the second device identification information which are obtained from the predetermined device with the corresponding information held by the holding unit, and determine whether or not at least one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed; another combination; and

a communication controlling unit configured to means for controlling control issuance of a notification to an external apparatus in accordance with a result of the comparison by the comparing means unit, the external apparatus being capable of receiving the notification through a predetermined communications line and managing a plurality of information processing apparatuses; and

an updating unit configured to update the corresponding information held by the holding unit in accordance with an update notification, for updating the combination of the first device identification information and the second device identification information, from the external apparatus,

wherein the notification issued by the communication controlling unit includes information indicating that either the first device identification information or the second device identification information is not being managed, and

wherein the communication controlling unit restricts issuing the accounting information obtained by the obtaining unit to the external apparatus if the comparing unit determines either the first device identification information or the second device identification information is not being managed, and removes the restriction and issues the accounting information obtained by the obtaining unit to the external apparatus if the corresponding information is updated by the updating unit.

Claim 2. (Canceled)

Claim 3. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a receiving unit configured to receive means for receiving the corresponding information corresponding to the first device identification information and the second device identification information from the external apparatus through the communications line; and holding means for holding the corresponding information received by the receiving means, wherein the comparing means compares the corresponding information held

by the holding means with the combination of the first device identification information and the second device identification information which are obtained from the predetermined device.

Claim 4. (Canceled)

Claim 5. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising

an inputting unit configured to means for inputting input an instruction for updating the first device identification information and/or the second device identification information,

wherein the communication controlling unit means issues a notification for update, based on the update instruction input by the inputting unit means, to the external apparatus.

Claims 6 - 8. (Canceled)

Claim 9. (Original) An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first device identification information is an internet protocol address.

Claim 10. (Original) An information processing apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the second device identification information includes at least MAC address information.

Claim 11. (Currently Amended) An information processing method for an information processing apparatus that manages a predetermined device capable of performing communication over a network, the method comprising:

holding corresponding information corresponding to first device identification information and second device identification information;

obtaining accounting information based on an image forming operation from the predetermined device;

a comparing step of comparing a combination of ~~the~~ first device identification information and ~~the~~ second device identification information which are obtained from the predetermined device with ~~the corresponding information held in said holding step, and determining whether or not at least one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed another combination, and~~

~~a communication controlling step of controlling issuance of a notification to an external apparatus in accordance with a result of the comparison in the comparing step, the external apparatus being capable of receiving the notification through a predetermined communications line and managing a plurality of information processing apparatuses; and~~

~~updating the corresponding information held in said holding step in accordance with an update notification, for updating the combination of the first device identification information and the second device identification information, from the external apparatus,~~

~~wherein the notification issued in said controlling step includes information indicating that either the first device identification information or the second device identification information is not being managed, and~~

wherein said controlling step restricts issuing the accounting information obtained in said obtaining step to the external apparatus if said comparing step determines either the first device identification information or the second device identification information is not being managed, and removes the restriction and issues the accounting information obtained in said obtaining step to the external apparatus if the corresponding information is updated in said updating step.

Claim 12. (Canceled)

Claim 13. (Currently Amended) An information processing method according to claim 11, further comprising ~~a receiving step of receiving the corresponding information corresponding to the first device identification information and the second device identification information from the external apparatus through the communications line, ; and a holding step of holding the corresponding information received in the receiving step, wherein the comparing step compares the corresponding information held in the holding step with the combination of the first device identification information and the second device identification information which are obtained from the predetermined device.~~

Claim 14. (Canceled)

Claim 15. (Currently Amended) An information processing method according to claim 11, further comprising

~~an inputting step of inputting an instruction for updating the first device identification information and/or the second device identification information via an input section, wherein the communication controlling step issues a notification for update, based on the update instruction input in the inputting step, to the external apparatus.~~

Claims 16 - 18. (Canceled)

Claim 19. (Original) An information processing method according to claim 11, wherein the first device identification information is an internet protocol address.

Claim 20. (Original) An information processing method according to claim 19, wherein the second device identification information includes at least MAC address information.

Claim 21. (Currently Amended) A computer program stored, in executable form, in a computer-usable medium and comprising control logic for causing a computer to manage that is executed by a computer that manages a predetermined device capable of performing communication over a network, the program control logic comprising computer readable program code for:

holding corresponding information corresponding to first device identification information and second device identification information;

obtaining accounting information based on an image forming operation from the predetermined device;

~~a comparing step of comparing a combination of the first device identification information and the second device identification information which are obtained from the predetermined device with the corresponding information held in said holding step, and determining whether or not at least one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed another combination; and~~

~~a communication controlling step of controlling issuance of a notification to an external apparatus in accordance with a result of the comparison in the said comparing step, the external apparatus being capable of receiving the notification through a predetermined communications line and managing a plurality of information processing apparatuses; and~~

~~updating the corresponding information held in said holding step in accordance with an update notification, for updating the combination of the first device identification information and the second device identification information, from the external apparatus,~~

~~wherein the notification issued in said controlling step includes information indicating that either the first device identification information or the second device identification information is not being managed, and~~

~~wherein said controlling step restricts issuing the accounting information obtained in said obtaining step to the external apparatus if said comparing step determines either the first device identification information or the second device identification information is not being managed, and removes the restriction and issues the accounting information obtained in said obtaining step to the external apparatus if the corresponding information is updated in said updating step.~~

Claim 22. (Currently Amended) A recording medium that is readable by a computer storing a program that is executed by an information processing apparatus that manages a predetermined device capable of performing communication over a network, the program comprising code for:

holding corresponding information corresponding to first device identification information and second device identification information;

obtaining accounting information based on an image forming operation from the predetermined device;

~~a comparing step of comparing a combination of the first device identification information and the second device identification information which are obtained from the predetermined device with the corresponding information held in said holding step, and determining whether or not at least one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed another combination thereof; and~~

~~a communication controlling step of controlling issuance of a notification to an external apparatus in accordance with a result of the comparison in the said comparing step, the external apparatus being capable of receiving the notification through a predetermined communications line and managing a plurality of information processing apparatuses; and~~

updating the corresponding information held in said holding step in accordance with an update notification, for updating the combination of the first device identification information and the second device identification information, from the external apparatus,

wherein the notification issued in said controlling step includes information indicating that either the first device identification information or the second device identification



information is not being managed, and

wherein said controlling step restricts issuing the accounting information obtained in said obtaining step to the external apparatus if said comparing step determines either the first device identification information or the second device identification information is not being managed, and removes the restriction and issues the accounting information obtained in said obtaining step to the external apparatus if the corresponding information is updated in said updating step.